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*Helping People
Help the Land*

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“Transmitted via e-mail”

March 30, 2006

MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 250-06-10

SUBJECT: FNM – Government Travel Card Delinquency Procedures

Purpose: To remind employees of the requirement to pay their GTC bill in full and advise them of the account delinquency and card suspension/cancellation policy.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2007.

Departmental Regulation 2300-001 requires employees to pay their undisputed travel charge card bill amounts in full when due to the contractor on or before the next statement date. This policy was reiterated in MN Bulletin No. 250-06-09 and is also contained in the USDA GTC Program Acknowledgement & Acceptance Statement signed by each employee applying for a travel card. If circumstances arise where an employee anticipates that a payment will be late, the employee should inform the local A/OPC of their travel account status and contact the charge card issuer (currently Bank of America) immediately. The charge card issuer may provide a viable option to the cardholder that would resolve the matter to avoid account suspension.

DR 2300-001 also charges the A/OPC and supervisors with monitoring individual travel card accounts for unauthorized use, misuse, and delinquency. To facilitate this policy, the A/OPC will generate monthly delinquency reports and prepare written notices for supervisors to issue to employees with past due account balances. Employee signatures will be required to acknowledge receipt of the notice. If the employee does not pay the amount due in full, the account will be suspended by Bank of America once an undisputed transaction remains unpaid for 61 days or more from the billing/closing date on the statement in which the unpaid charges first appeared. Bank of America will cancel an account once undisputed transactions remain unpaid for 120 days. An account may also be canceled if it has been suspended twice during the preceding 12 months and becomes past due again.

Employees who have lost their charge card privileges due to card cancellation by the bank because of delinquency or use of the card for non-official purposes and need to perform official travel must charge their common carrier transportation (i.e., airline tickets) to their agency centrally billed accounts (NRCS “GVTS” account managed by National Headquarters). All other travel related costs must be paid by the employee using a personal charge card or with personal funds.

In addition to card suspension/cancellation due to delinquent account balances, employees may also be subject to administrative discipline in accordance with the “USDA Zero Tolerance Policy” regarding use of the travel card and the USDA Guide for Disciplinary Penalties. The written notices issued to employees with balances past due 30 days or more constitute an initial warning from the immediate supervisor. Employees who subsequently exceed 60 days past due for charges identified in the written notice will be subject to the penalty for a first offense of failure to pay just debts in a timely and proper manner (USDA Guide for Disciplinary Penalties, 3.w.). The penalty shall be determined by the State Conservationist and will range from a Letter of Reprimand up to a 14-day suspension. Employees who fail to pay their travel card bill within 120 days will receive the penalty for a second offense of failure to pay just debts in a timely and proper manner. The penalty shall be determined by the State Conservationist and will range from a 1-day suspension to removal.

These directives apply to all Minnesota NRCS employees in the performance of official travel. Questions regarding the Government Travel Card should be directed to Bryan Welp, A/OPC, at (651) 602-7860 or bryan.welp@mn.usda.gov.

This policy will be incorporated into the next Minnesota Supplement to General Manual, GM250.

//signed//

WILLIAM HUNT
State Conservationist

Attachment:
Sample 30-day Delinquent Notice

DIST: AE